

# Senate Health and Human Services Committee

*Sophie Walsh 271-3469*

**HB 524-FN**, relative to disbursement of funds by the New Hampshire vaccine association and establishing a committee to study the efficacy of the New Hampshire vaccine association.

**Hearing Date:** April 2, 2026

**Time Opened:** 3:11 p.m.

**Time Closed:** 3:31 p.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Rochefort, Avard, Birdsell, Prentiss and Long

**Members of the Committee Absent:** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill directs the New Hampshire vaccine association to disburse funds collected through assessments by the end of each fiscal year to the extent practicable. The bill also establishes a committee to study the efficacy of the New Hampshire vaccine association.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. Granger

Rep. Belcher

Rep. Wherry

Rep. Polozov

Rep. Sirois

Rep. Sellers

Rep. Sabourin dit

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**Who supports the bill:** 12 people signed in support of the bill. Full sign in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Sophie Walsh (sophie.walsh@gc.nh.gov).

**Who opposes the bill:** 292 people signed in opposition to the bill. Full sign in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Sophie Walsh (sophie.walsh@gc.nh.gov).

**Who is neutral on the bill:** 3 people signed in neutral on the bill. Full sign in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Sophie Walsh (sophie.walsh@gc.nh.gov).

**Summary of testimony presented:**

Representative Robert Wherry, Hillsborough – District 13

- Representative Wherry stated that he is introducing the bill on behalf of the prime sponsor.

- This bill addresses the deposit and disbursement of funds for the New Hampshire Vaccine Association (NHVA). This is intended to put tighter controls and establish more transparency, particularly in regard to leftover funding at the end of the year.
- This bill also establishes a new study committee to assess the efficacy of NHVA. This would enable a deeper review on how funds are raised and provide a better understanding of how much funding is needed from the state budget. It would also allow for a review of demographics and the benefits of extending this to other demographics. The study committee will also determine how increases in vaccine costs and health insurance rates are impacted.
- This bill have no impact on the mandated childhood immunizations, as well as non-mandatory vaccines.
- Senator Avard inquired about the fiscal impact of the bill, and Representative Wherry explained that the fiscal note has been revised to minimize impact.
- Senator Prentiss asked if there is any data or knowledge on funds being historically returned, and Representative Wherry said there is nothing with the level of clarity desired in this bill.

#### Representative Lucy Weber, Cheshire – District 5

- Representative Weber described NHVA as a win-win-win program, noting that it is beneficial for providers, insurers, parents, children, and the Department of Health and Human Services.
- This program allows for bulk purchases of all vaccines that will be needed for childhood vaccinations throughout the state. Since the payment is made up-front through an assessment on insurers and Medicaid, providers are able to avoid individual billing through insurance, while parents receive the vaccines for free.
- This program does not need to be studied in Representative Weber's opinion, as it has been working well for decades.
- Representative Weber explained that Representative Knirk led an effort to see if this model could be applied to adult vaccines. In the end, they concluded that these need to remain two separate systems.
- Representative Weber noted that this bill started out as a repeal of NHVA and said she feels as though there is a worldwide trend of attempting to make vaccines less accessible to people who want them.
- Senator Rochefort noted that this concept has been in the House for a few years and asked if Representative Weber thinks there is a misconception about what NHVA is.
- Representative Weber said she thinks that could be possible. She referenced the fiscal impact to the state and emphasized that the state is paying less now than it would be if they were not buying in bulk.

Megan Heddy and Iain Watt, Department of Health and Human Services

- Ms. Heddy explained that DHHS is not taking a position on this bill as amended by the House. The Department was in opposition to the introduced version of the bill and worked with the House to provide clarifying language.
- Ms. Heddy referenced the proposed study committee and said the efficacy of NHVA speaks for itself. Partnership with NHVA saves New Hampshire 30% annually on immunization purchases for privately insured children, with a total administrative cost of less than 1% that is borne by commercial payers.
- This partnership ensures that all New Hampshire families who want immunizations have access to them at no cost.
- Mr. Watt explained that this program operates as a public-private partnership involving more than 80 commercial health insurers and third-party administrators, 220 family and pediatric practices, and both the Insurance Department and DHHS.
- Cost savings and other oversight information is delivered through mandatory reporting annually.
- Senator Rochefort asked if current practices are already doing what the proposed study committee intends to do, in terms of reporting and transparency.
- Mr. Watt confirmed that there is a lot of detail about the program and its financing included in the reports.

Dr. Patricia Edwards, American Academy of Pediatrics

- Dr. Edwards stated that she is a pediatrician and a board member of NHVA.
- She emphasized that NHVA is completely transparent. She expressed some confusion about why the proposed study committee is needed, as all of this information is available on the website.
- Dr. Edwards referenced the company that deals with NHVA's financial reporting and explained that it does not cost anything. The money they receive ahead of a purchase is often put into a money market account to make interest, which pays for the financing company. She emphasized that this is a win-win that is essentially costing nothing, as the Medicaid budget and insurers pay for the vaccines with a discount from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Dr. Julie Kim, American Academy of Pediatrics

- Dr. Kim stated that she is speaking in opposition to the bill, as it is an unnecessary study.
- Dr. Kim referenced her experience in pediatric oncology and explained that many of her patients may need to get revaccinated after treatment. NHVA allows these patients to get revaccinated for free. If they had to pay out of

pocket, they could be paying large costs of up to \$2,000 - \$3,000 for the vaccines with administration fees.

- Dr. Kim emphasized that this study would be a waste of resources, as we already know that NHVA does a good job.

Kate Frey, New Futures

- Ms. Frey echoed prior testimony and said she has no issue with the reporting mechanisms in the bill, but disagrees with the proposed study committee. She noted that efficacy is a very broad term.
- This program enables all children to receive vaccinations free of charge. Ms. Frey noted that NHVA has served as a model program to other states and emphasized this shows its effectiveness.

Representative Yury Polozov, Merrimack – District 10

- Representative Polozov explained that NHVA is an interesting entity, as it has taxing authority to insurers with some exemptions to RSA 91-a.
- He emphasized the need for transparency in medical pricing, noting that some providers may benefit of NHVA were repealed.
- Representative Polozov noted that many other states operate without similar entities and emphasized the importance of studying this.

Dr. Christine Arsnaw, American Academy of Pediatrics

- Dr. Arsnaw explained that she is a pediatrician, speaking from the lens of a private practice owner in opposition to the bill.
- She noted that 3,000 people, many of whom were doctors and nurses, opposed this bill when it was a full repeal. She emphasized that this demonstrates how important NHVA is to the medical community.
- Dr. Arsnaw referenced data from last year's hearing and noted that for her small practice, it would cost \$26,000 per month to purchase vaccines. This would be a financially challenging step to take.
- If the proposed study committee were established, Dr. Arsnaw thinks it is important to have at least half of its membership be health care providers.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 6, 2026